

Kansas Rehabilitation Services

State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation & Supported Employment Services FFY 2011-2013

Attachment 6.3 Quality, scope and extent of supported employment services

Supported employment means competitive employment in an integrated setting with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. This service is intended for individuals:

- For whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and
- Who, because of the nature and severity of the disability, need intensive supported employment services from Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) and extended services/ongoing support from non-VR sources such as community agencies in order to perform the work and maintain the employment.

Supported employment also includes transitional employment for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. Transitional employment means a series of temporary job placements in competitive work in integrated settings with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities due to mental illness. In transitional employment, the provision of ongoing support services must include continuing sequential job placements until job permanency is achieved.

Supported employment services provided by KRS are time-limited and are provided for a period not to exceed 18 months unless the consumer and counselor agree to an extension in order to achieve the objectives identified in the Individual Plan for Employment. Any appropriate service needed to support and maintain an individual in supported employment may be provided. Services typically focus on:

- Job development and placement.
- Intensive on-the-job training and other training provided by skilled job coaches.
- Regular observation and coaching of the consumer at the work site.
- Discrete post-employment services that are not available from an extended services provider and that are necessary to maintain the job placement, such as job station redesign; repair and maintenance of

assistive technology; and the replacement of prosthetic and orthotic devices.

- Coaching to develop natural supports.

After the time-limited VR services end, the supported employment service provider maintains extended ongoing services with the consumer or has identified a plan specifying how the community-service system will provide the extended ongoing supports the customer needs to maintain employment. These extended services are not funded with VR dollars. To reinforce and maintain stability of the job placement, ongoing services include regular contacts with:

- The consumer.
- Employers.
- Parents, guardians or other representatives of the consumer.
- Other appropriate professional, advisory and advocacy contact persons.

Individual job placements resulting in competitive, integrated employment are the KRS priority for outcomes of supported employment services because they are associated with important quality indicators: higher earnings, consumer choice, community integration, and more co-worker interaction.

Timing of the transition to extended services

After the consumer has achieved job stability, KRS will continue services for at least 90 days at a level and scope comparable to those expected to be provided through extended services after VR services cease. This period is intended to assure that the consumer will continue to be successful with the level of support anticipated once transition to extended services provided by the community service system has been completed. The case may be closed if stability is continued after this time period.

Service delivery system

In implementing supported employment services, KRS emphasizes the importance of geographic distribution of services. KRS also places a priority on working with community agencies with the capacity to provide extended/ongoing support services. Providers include community developmental disability organizations, mental health centers, independent living centers, and other public and private entities.

Through the current service provider agreements, several key components

or milestones exist for supported employment services: creation of a job development action plan; placement; stabilization; 45 days of continuous, successful employment; finalization of an extended ongoing service plan; and successful VR case closure in accordance with all of the requirements set out in federal regulations. Individualized job coaching may also be provided through service provider agreements.

These provider agreements also:

- Describe the time-limited services that will be provided through KRS for eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- Address responsibility of the providers to coordinate the community service system, which has responsibility for funding and providing the extended ongoing services necessary for the consumer to maintain employment once they exit the VR program.

The Individual Plan for Employment is used as the basis for referral to one of the providers. It also describes the criteria, specific to each consumer, for determining that job performance is stable, determining how and when progress will be evaluated, and describing how extended ongoing support services will be provided. After the consumer reaches stability on the job, the consumer, service provider and VR counselor work together to *finalize* the plan for extended ongoing support services. This allows the plan to be specific and customized according to the consumer's current work situation and support needs. As a result, the ongoing support section of the IPE may be amended, with the consumer's agreement, in order to reflect the most current information available.

Quality of services

VR counselors, regional management staff, the Central Office Field Liaison, and the Central Office Provider Liaison are charged with assuring the quality of services provided. KRS is working with the provider community to develop a report card system to assist in monitoring and in facilitating the consumer's informed choice of service providers. This report card system is targeted for implementation in FFY 2012 following installation and testing of a secure web portal to allow direct data collection from service providers.

The performance of these providers in helping consumers secure meaning employment and wages consistent with their goals and priorities significantly impacts the overall KRS performance on standards and indicators. Therefore, accountability benchmarks have been established with the target of 80% of persons referred to service providers obtaining jobs within an average of 120 days, and 60% of persons referred achieving successful closures. The goal is

a network of effective supported employment providers whose focus is on the vocational objectives, goals, rehabilitation needs and priorities of the consumers to be served.

KRS is one of the partners in the evidence-based practice project for supported employment services for persons with severe and persistent mental illness. This project is coordinated by Dartmouth. In Kansas, the University of Kansas and numerous community mental health centers are participants.